

Back To December by The Tozier Wheeler Twins (omfgiminlovewithneeks)

Series: [Songfics](#) [1]

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: Alternate Universe - Modern Setting, Based on a Taylor Swift Song, Fluff and Angst, Homophobia, I'm Sorry, M/M, Post-Break Up, but less fluff more angst, to be fair there's hardly any fluff

Language: English

Characters: Mike Wheeler, Nancy Wheeler, Ted Wheeler, Will Byers

Relationships: Joyce Byers/Jim "Chief" Hopper (mentioned), Will Byers/Mike Wheeler

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Summary:

He went back to December all the time

Back To December

Author's Note:

I just want to say, I love Will Byers, I love Byeler, I have no idea why I'm doing this, and I am so sorry for this.

Also, I initially planned for this to be either a Stenbrough or Stozier, but somehow it ended up being Byeler.

UPDATED ON JAN 27, 2019: I can't even begin to tell you how bad my writing was a year ago. But I cleaned this up a little, and hopefully, it'll make you cringe less.

UPDATED ON JUN 29, 2020: Cleaned up a bit more. It actually looked half-decent now.

He was sitting at the coffee shop facing what had been their favorite cinema. It had been their favorite, he thought, because it had been the closest to *his* dorm, and after a movie, they would've walked back to *his* place. They would've talked about something, so lively that they would've talked with their hands, and he would've poked *his* cheek, or put an arm around *his* shoulder, or around *his* waist to start a tickle war. After high school, they didn't go to the same college, but both of their schools were in the same city, so they had had lots of opportunities to see each other.

So here he was, waiting for *him* in the small coffee shop they had walked past so many times but never entered, on the last week of May. He checked the time on his phone — 12:43pm on Wednesday — before looking outside. His window seat gave him the perfect view of the fast-paced city life outside the shop, in contrast to the quiet atmosphere the shop provided. This wasn't the kind of coffee shop people went to on a rushed lunch, but rather the type that writers and artists went to find inspiration or the type a stressed-out student went to find some peace of mind. On any other day, he would've appreciated the woody theme of the shop, from the different shades of brown of the wooden planks covering the walls, to the intricately

woven bamboo furniture, or the piano in the corner furthest from the door, waiting to be played by a pair of artistic hands, or the warm lighting and the cozy coffee smell in the air that would've made him feel fuzzy by now, had he not been so nervous. Today, however, he had something much more important to think about: a conversation he simultaneously dreaded and desperately hoped to have.

About five minutes to 1pm, the door opened and *he* walked in, as magnificent as ever. *His* eyes scanned across the room, and their eyes met briefly before *he* went to the counter to order a drink. After ordering, *he* tentatively walked towards his table.

"Hey, Will," he greeted as soon as Will was close enough to hear.

"Hi, Mike," replied Will, "have you been waiting for long?"

"No, not at all," lied Mike. He had been here since a little past 11am and was on his second drink, but Will didn't need to know that. "Have a seat," said Mike, gesturing the seat across from him.

"Thanks for agreeing to meet me," said Mike, to which Will only replied with a bashful nod. Things were awkward between them. Things had never been awkward before, and Mike didn't know how to fix it.

"Uhm, how's your mom?" Mike tried.

"She's good," replied Will. "She's actually trying to quit smoking, and she's making Hopper do it as well." Will then paused for a second before continuing, "How's your family?"

Bad topic, Mike thought. Things had been more than tense between Mike and his father lately, but he shouldn't burden Will with that information. That had made things even more awkward for Mike, if possible, because he had never felt like burdening Will with something before.

"You know how things usually go at the Wheelers," Mike tried for a nervous chuckle. "Holly is turning 10, and according to my mom, she's been curious about the 'more girly stuff', whatever that is." Mike had never felt this anxious talking to Will, or to anyone, for that

matter. "I heard from Nancy that Jonathan is opening his own studio."

"Yeah, but he still works at Nancy's newspaper," responded Will. "Their boss has a lot of connections and she has recommended him to a lot of people with influence."

"That's wonderful!" Mike commented. A smile appeared on Will's lips but didn't reach his eyes. Mike wished, for a moment, that he could see the way Will's eyes light up when talking about his family, or hear Will's laugh at one of his stupid jokes, or see how Will's eyes were filled with love looking at him. How he missed those moments.

It was the happiest moment of his life. They were in Mike's truck, driving back to Will's from the quarry — their favorite outdoor spot. Their favorite spots in the world would consist of Castle Byers, Will's room, and Mike's basement, where they could have all the privacy and safety in the world, but the quarry would be next on the list. It used to be their least favorite as well, because to Mike, that had been the place they had pulled Will's fake body out of the water, and to Will, Mike had been forced to jump from its cliff. It had been Mike's idea that they spent their time at their least favorite location, because "we can't change the past, but we can always replace the bad memories with better ones." So they had gone there every week since summer had started, sometimes twice a week if the weather was too good of an opportunity to pass on. Which had led to this moment, with Mike driving and producing terrible renditions of love songs on the radio, and Will on the passenger side, laughing so hard tears had formed in his eyes. If anyone asked, Mike would say this was the happiest moment of his life.

Of course, if anyone had asked Mike on the day after their graduation, that moment would've been the night before, after he had had the graduation party at his house. That would've been when Mike had snuck out to Will's and had finally mustered enough courage to ask Will to be his boyfriend. Or if you had asked Mike the same question last week, it would've been when Mike and Will had spent the afternoon swimming and throwing rocks at the quarry. If you asked Mike two weeks after, it would be the moment Mike helped Will pack for college. First-year students had to stay on campus, but they were planning to move in together as soon as summer arrived. If you asked Mike that question that November, it would

be the time Mike walked Will back to his dorm. Mike would look at Will and see the whole universe sparkling in his eyes, and he would realize that he loved the boy in front of him. He would pull Will in for a kiss — their first kiss in public, and it would rain like every cliché scene in any romance movie. Mike would give a faux complaint before they would race back to Will's place. Of course, Mike didn't know half of that, and the other half wasn't on his mind. To him, every single moment spent with Will Byers was the happiest moment of his life, because he was that dramatic. But everybody knew, the true happiest moment of Mike's life was his first day of kindergarten when he had befriended Will.

Will had a guarded expression that he had never had to use on Mike before, but Mike couldn't blame anyone but himself for that. Their last conversation had involved a lot of tears, yelling, and some hurtful words.

"So, uhm, how have you been doing?" Mike asked sheepishly.

"I've been great," replied Will, a little too eagerly. Mike wondered if he had practiced answering that question beforehand. "School has been a lot more demanding than... uh, last semester, but I got to study a lot of new and cool things. I also got a job at the art supply store near my school, and the employee discount is really helpful."

"That's great!" Mike said genuinely. "I recently got a job at a coffee shop in town, and the customers can get a little unreasonable from time to time, but the payout is surprisingly good for a barista. So I guess you're not coming home this summer?"

"I just visited last Easter," answered Will. "I think I'll find some time to visit this summer, but no, I'm not coming home for the whole vacation."

"Oh, good to know," said Mike. They then fell back into silence. Part of Mike wanted to ask more about irrelevant stuff. *Ask about his roommate, his favorite teacher, his preferred spot to sit on campus during lunch, anything.* But another part of him knew he needed to get to the reason why he had asked Will to meet him today. Mike finally decided to stop beating around the bush and get to the point.

“Look, Will,” Mike started, suddenly unable to look anywhere but at his coffee, “I’m sorry.”

March 22nd, 11:34pm. Mike had been staring at his phone for hours. Besides sleeping and getting up to fetch something to eat, that had been all he had done for the last 24 hours. Mike wanted to call Will, but every time he was about to dial the number he had learned by heart, he remembered Will’s last look towards him. Broken. There had been no other words to describe it. When Mike had walked away, he had shattered Will into millions of pieces. Mike remembered vividly, the desperate look in Will’s eyes, trying to convey the message his sobbing self no longer able to pronounce, pleading Mike to stay. That had been too much for Mike, so he had looked away. And not once had he looked back at Will, not when he had headed to the door, not when he had muttered ‘Goodbye, Will’, and not when he had closed the door to Will’s dorm room, leaving the one he loved the most falling apart inside.

March 22nd, 11:53pm. Mike picked up his phone. Should he call Will? Would Will expect his call? Would Will even want Mike to call? Or was he dreading it, hoping that it would never come? When Mike had walked away, he had cried himself to sleep for nights. Mike had known his pain had been nothing compared to the pain he had caused Will, but he had hoped that in time, it would get better. By now he only wished it were true for Will, because obviously, for him it hadn’t gotten any less painful. It had been his choice, so he should shut up and get it over with. But Will hadn’t chosen any of that, so he shouldn’t be miserable because of Mike’s choice.

March 22nd, 11:58pm. Mike unlocked his phone and inputted one digit at a time. Ever since kindergarten, they had always spent this day together. Ever since they both got a phone, Mike had always called Will first thing after midnight. So Mike shouldn’t have waited this long to call, right?

March 23rd, 12:04am. Mike didn’t call Will.

“I’m sorry.”

The silence filled the air. Mike hated this silence. It wasn’t the comfortable silence between him and Will once upon a time when

they had simply enjoyed each other's company. This was the kind of silence that suffocated the light out of life, and it was becoming more and more unbearable.

"Why, Mike?" Will asked after a while, his voice barely above a whisper.

Why, indeed. The simple word held all the questions that needed an answer. *Why did you leave? Why didn't you reply to any of my messages the first month? Why didn't you say anything to me for the last 5 months? Why did you finally decide to contact me? Why now?* Every question screamed inside Mike's mind with Will's voice, and Will deserved an answer for each and every single one of them. Mike took a deep breath and started talking.

"It was 2 weeks after Thanksgiving. Dad came to visit me. I guess after the divorce, he finally realized how little he'd been there for his children. And since both Nancy and I had decided to spend both Thanksgiving and Christmas with mom, he had to squeeze his time in between," Mike gave a humorless chuckle. He remembered the day the divorce had been finalized. He had gone to Will and started crying, despite not knowing what he was crying about. Perhaps he had been glad his mom had finally been free from the emotional stress, or he had cried because the illusion of his perfect family had officially crumbled. It had been the first and only time Mike cried in front of Will. Well, second if he counted when Will had been possessed by the Mind Flayer, but that hadn't been fully Will. Whatever the reason had been, that didn't matter now.

"Anyway, dad came in when I was making you a scrapbook for Christmas. I had printed out all the photos we had taken together since summer and was working on gluing them onto the scrapbook. He saw them, and it was impossible not to know what was happening. He tore the scrapbook apart. There was a lot of arguing and yelling. I don't think he went physical on me, but the memory of that night was a bit fuzzy. I remembered he—" Mike's voice cracked at the memory, "—threatened to hurt you if I kept seeing you."

"So instead of telling me that and dealing with it together, your solution was to hurt me?" Will asked calmly, the hurt in his voice loud and clear.

"I'm sorry. I don't know what I was thinking—"

"You called our relationship a 'disgusting way of life', Mike."

Mike flinched at the mention of his own words. "I know. I promise, I never thought like that about us. That was my dad's words. I just— It's— I know saying that would hurt you, and I thought it'd be easier if you hated me." Mike was trying hard to hold back his tears now.

Will took a moment of silence before responding. "I could never hate you, Mike Wheeler. But you did hurt me."

"I know. I'm sorry," Mike choked. "I'd go back to December and change everything if I could. Hurting you was the worst thing I've ever done."

Will took his time taking in what Mike had said. After a moment of silence, Mike finally looked up at Will. Will's gaze was intense, and he was looking at Mike like he could see right through him. His eyes, which used to be so vibrant, now looked broken. Mike felt a pang of guilt, knowing he was the one who had taken the joy out of Will's eyes.

"So, why now?" Will finally asked.

"I talked to Nancy," Mike answered, finding himself unable to look away from Will now that they had made eye contact. "She helped me talk to mom. They've both accepted me for who I am now. She also told me to apologize to you, or I'd regret it for the rest of my life. And dad kind of hates and ignores me regardless of what I do now, so I don't think talking to you would trigger anything from him." *And I miss you. So much. I want you back in my life.*

"And?" Will asked, seemingly knew what Mike had stopped himself from saying.

"And I miss you," Mike gave up. "I'm sorry. This must sound so pathetic, and I'm in no position to say such thing, but if you give me another chance, I swear I'll love you right." Mike recoiled at his own words. "*Shit!* I'm sorry I didn't mean to say that word. I mean— I do love you, but this isn't the— What I mean was," he tried to recollect

himself, “I know I hurt you, and I know you have no reason to listen to this, and I completely understand and respect your decision, but if you give me another chance, I’ll make it up to you even if it takes a lifetime to do so. I mean, I can’t change what’s happened, but I want to give you better memories, so you don’t have to think about what I said when looking back at us.”

Will was silent for a while, his eyes full of sorrow never leaving Mike’s. When the silence had become unbearable, Mike started.

“I’m sorry, I shouldn’t have—”

“Mike,” interrupted Will, “I—”

Author's Note:

What do you think? Like it? Love it? Hate it? Found something I should improve? Let me know in the comment.

I'm so depressed after writing this and I have nobody to blame but myself.

If you want to connect, my Tumblr account is [@trashmouthdiangelo](#)